HEALTH
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THE

RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

****

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

1960

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

by

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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1960

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended 31st December, 1960 :

1. STATISTICS :

During 1960 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my Report.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES :

(a) Ambulances.- Two ambulances are stationed at Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value.

For yet another year the City and District is deeply indebted to those members of the Ely and Littleport St. John Ambulance Divisions who devote so much of their spare time to ambulance duties. How long they will be able to maintain this service is difficult to forecast, as the passing years take their toll of the old members, and, unfortunately, present day youth seems largely indifferent. According to my information, recruits to both Divisions are needed desperately.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.- These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses, the value of whose services can never be accurately assessed, continue to give cheerfully their services to those needing their help.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES (Contd.)

(c) Hospitals.-

(i) Tower Hospital for Chronic Sick

(ii) St. John's Hospital for Infectious Diseases and Long-stay Cases

(iii) The Grange Maternity Home

These three Hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

3. WATER :

(a) (i) The supply for the District is drawn from two chalk wells at West Row, and water supplies of adequate quantity and quality have been maintained throughout the year.

My previous Reports, particularly that for 1959, referring to the necessity for increasing both the capacity of the rising mains and the water towers, are as apposite to-day as then. A succession of drought periods, together with the provision of modern sanitation in many dwellings and the new techniques for using water for horticultural purposes all combine to put a strain on the system.

During the period of drought occurring in the middle of the year it was found necessary to put restrictions on the use of hose pipes for purposes other than domestic - i.e., for car washing and garden watering. This is the first time the Council have found it necessary to introduce any such restrictions.

(ii) There have been no major breakdowns during the year.

(b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.

(ii) The usual chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year and proved satisfactory. In addition, all new mains are sampled and no connections are made until the reports on these samples are found satisfactory.

3. WATER (Contd.)

(b) (iii) There have been no extensions during 1960.

(iv) The water has no plumbo solvent action.

(v) Between 98-99% of houses in the District are supplied with water.

4. SEWAGE :

(a) Steady progress is maintained in the development of the Council's schemes for the improvement of the District's sewage problems. Although to many this progress may appear extremely slow at times, it must be appreciated that sewage problems involve an enormous amount of detailed discussion, very involved calculations and the drawing up of many involved technical plans.

(b) Substantial advances were made towards the completion of the joint scheme for the parishes of Sutton and Witcham.

Referring to the parish of Stretham, the Consulting Engineers were able to complete the plan by the end of the year, and these have been submitted to the Ministry for provisional approval.

Furthermore, the Consulting Engineers have bee instructed to prepare schemes for Mepal and Witchford.

The conversion of those houses outstanding from E.C's. to W.C's. is still going forward. Although not yet complete, the plans are in approve stages, and under financial consideration.

No Discretionary Grants have been made during the year.

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5. HOUSING :

Permanent Housing:

No. of dwellings completed during 1960	43
No. of dwellings provided under Housing Acts to 31st December, 1960	1547
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December, 1960	Nil
No. of pre-war Council houses improved during 1960 by the provision of standard amenities as defined in the House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959, i.e., bath in bathroom, wash-hand basin, hot water supply, water-closet and foodstore	108
No. of pre-war Council houses so improved since commencement of scheme in 1958	144

Temporary Housing:

No. of converted ex-service huts occupied at 31st December, 1960	22

Slum Clearance:

No. of Demolition Orders and Closing Orders made - and Undertakings withdrawing Unfit Dwellings from Use for Human Habitation accepted - during 1960	11
No. of families rehoused by Council from unfit dwellings (including converted ex-service huts) during 1960	20

Private Enterprise:

New Permanent Houses:

No. of dwellings completed during 1960	23
No. of dwellings completed since April, 1945	329
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December, 1960	31

5. HOUSING (Contd.)

Private Enterprise (Contd.)

Subsidised Provision and Improvement of Dwellings

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958: Section 46 - New Dwellings for Agricultural Workers - £10 or £15 per annum for 40 years from Completion

No. of dwellings completed during 1960 3*

No. of dwellings completed since April 1945 37*

No. of dwellings completed since 1938 (commencement of scheme) 62

* These figures are included in numbers under heading "New Permanent Houses" above.

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958: Section 30 - Dwellings Improved or Provided by Conversion of Buildings with aid of Discretionary Improvement Grant

No. of dwellings improved or provided - and amount of grant paid - during 1960 Nil

No. of dwellings improved or provided - and amount of grant paid - since 1949 (commencement of scheme) :

181 dwellings £44,482:10: 5.

House Purchase and Housing Act, 1959: Section 4 - Dwellings Improved by Provision of Standard Amenities (as specified above) with Aid of Standard Grant

No. of dwellings improved, and amount of grant paid, during 1960 - 33 dwellings, £4,336:12: 3.

No. of dwellings improved, and amount of grant paid, since 1959 (commencement of scheme) - 47 dwellings, £5,959: 4: 6.

6. SCHOOLS :

I have no comments to make.

7. MILK :

Since April 1959 the retail sale of raw milk has not been allowed in accordance with the demands of the Milk (Special Designations) (Specified Areas) Order.

Some of the general public still leave their milk bottles at pavement level. I wish that this unhealthy practice would stop entirely; also the few instances where milk bottles are used for purposes other than holding milk. A very disgusting practice.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES :

(a) 99 notifications of infectious diseases were received, the total being made up as follows :

Measles	67
Whooping Cough	6
Scarlet Fever	12
Pneumonia	7
Infective Hepatitis	1
Erysipelas	2
Salmonella typhi-murium	3
Sonne Dysentry	1
	99

Referring to the three cases of infection by salmonella typhi-murium, two of these cases occurred in one village, and, two months later, the third case occurred in another village 3½ miles away. Careful enquiries gave no clue as to the origin in any of the cases nor was there any relationship demonstrable between the cases in the two villages.

(b) Premises are disinfected on request.

(c) During the year no case of diphtheria occurred in the District. This is a very satisfactory and happy fact to record.

Immunization of a good number of children and young adults against polio-myelitis has been carried out by private Practitioners and through the County Council Clinics.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES (Contd.)

Protection against these two very serious diseases, as well as Small Pox and Whooping Cough, can only be obtained by early immunization or vaccination, and I would urge every parent to make sure that these measures are carried out during the first year or two of life. As I have said before, I feel that negligence in this respect is really criminal.

(d) Tuberculosis.- 9 new cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustments, there are now the following numbers on the Register

Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
Females	26	Females	6
Males	37	Males	1

Compared with 1959, the figures shew a decrease of 2 cases.

9. FOOD :

(i) The following is a list of food handling premises in the area :

Butchers	14
Bakers	7
Fish Shops	5
Grocery and General Food Stores	54
Cafes	3

(ii) 42 premises are registered for the storage and sale of ice cream.

Dairies registered under the Milk & Dairies Regulations 1949 - 1954 = 3.

There is no ice cream manufactured for sale in the area.

9. FOOD (Contd.)

Food Hygiene :

The position so far as food hygiene is concerned remains much the same as for the past year or two. To ensure that a proper standard of hygiene is not only instituted, but also maintained, necessitates many more than one or two visits by the Council's officers. This problem really is one of man-power and time available.

Some employers and their employees are to be congratulated on the excellence of their establishments, and, as I have said before, they have nothing to fear.

There are, however, some employers who deserve prosecution, as, despite visits, explanations and assistance offered, these individuals seem to be devoid of any sense of responsibility to the community. Furthermore, it must be remembered that indifferent and dirty employers lead only to their employees following the bad example.

The Public Health Inspector and I are always willing to give assistance and advice whenever sought, and we would much rather do this than have to ask the Council to invoke the penalties contained in the Regulations.

The standard of food hygiene in many homes is deplorable, a fact to which I have referred in past years. I may say that I have numberless occasions of observing the actual state of affairs in many houses, as I carry out my normal duties.

I would impress on the Education Authorities the advantages and the necessity of including some instruction in food hygiene in the school curriculum for older children.

Unsound Food :

The following items of food were surrendered unfit for food and destroyed :

Canned meat, fruit, milk etc. - 60 tins

Canadian pears - 320 lbs.

10. MISCELLANEOUS :

(a) Rodent Control :

During the year the Public Health Inspector and the Rodent Officer have done 532 domestic house and business premises inspections, and 845 treatments and re-treatments have been carried out.

(b) Moveable Dwellings :

Two caravan sites have been set up during the past twelve months, one at Witchford and another at Littleport. These are good sites and will, I feel, fill a long felt want. The owners in both cases co-operated very willingly with the Public Health Inspector and myself when lay-out and other problems were under discussion, and I am grateful to both these gentlemen.

(c) Factories Act :

The position is the same as for the previous year. Only one factory of any size exists in the District. The position generally is kept under observation.

(d) Slaughterhouses :

There are two private slaughterhouses in the District. Under the Slaughterhouses Act the necessary report to the Minister was drawn up, and submitted at the end of the year. The report shewed that a number of structional alterations were necessary in one case, and very drastic modifications and additions were necessary in the other, to bring these premises up to the required standards.

Number of animals slaughtered - 2,768

Number of carcases inspected - ~~2,768~~ 2768

10. MISCELLANEOUS (Contd.)

(e) Clean Air :

No real problems arose during the year. Diesel fumes continue to contaminate the District. I am happy to note that there is an increasing criticism in the national press of these foul and stinking fumes.

I am informed by motor engineers that properly maintained and properly driven diesel-engined vehicles should not emit any black smoke. How can these facts be reconciled with what can be seen every day on every road in the District, I wonder ?

11. PERSONAL :

To my colleagues, Mr. Wickens, Mr. Parr, Mr. Clifford Jones and his Staff, Mr. Arnold Cross, Mr. Burtt and his Staff, I extend my sincerest thanks, as always, for their help and assistance in solving the many problems arising in Public Health work to-day.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.